THE ETERNALS TM

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

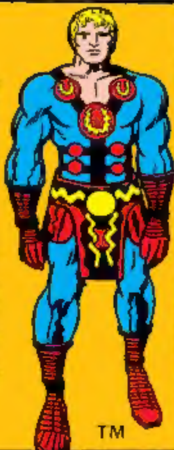
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WHEN GODS WALK THE EARTH!

THE ETERNALS TM



ONLY IN THE AWESOME ERA OF THE SPACE GOD'S RETURN COULD THIS ACTION SHOCKER HAPPEN!

"THE ASTRONAUTS!"

Strange events have exposed a startling fact, kept alive through the centuries only by myth and superstition—man is not alone on the evolutionary chain!! He has shared the planet with two species unknown to him! Now, in a sudden burst of violence, the Deviants have risen from their domain beneath the sea to challenge all humanity!! But mankind has unexpected allies—

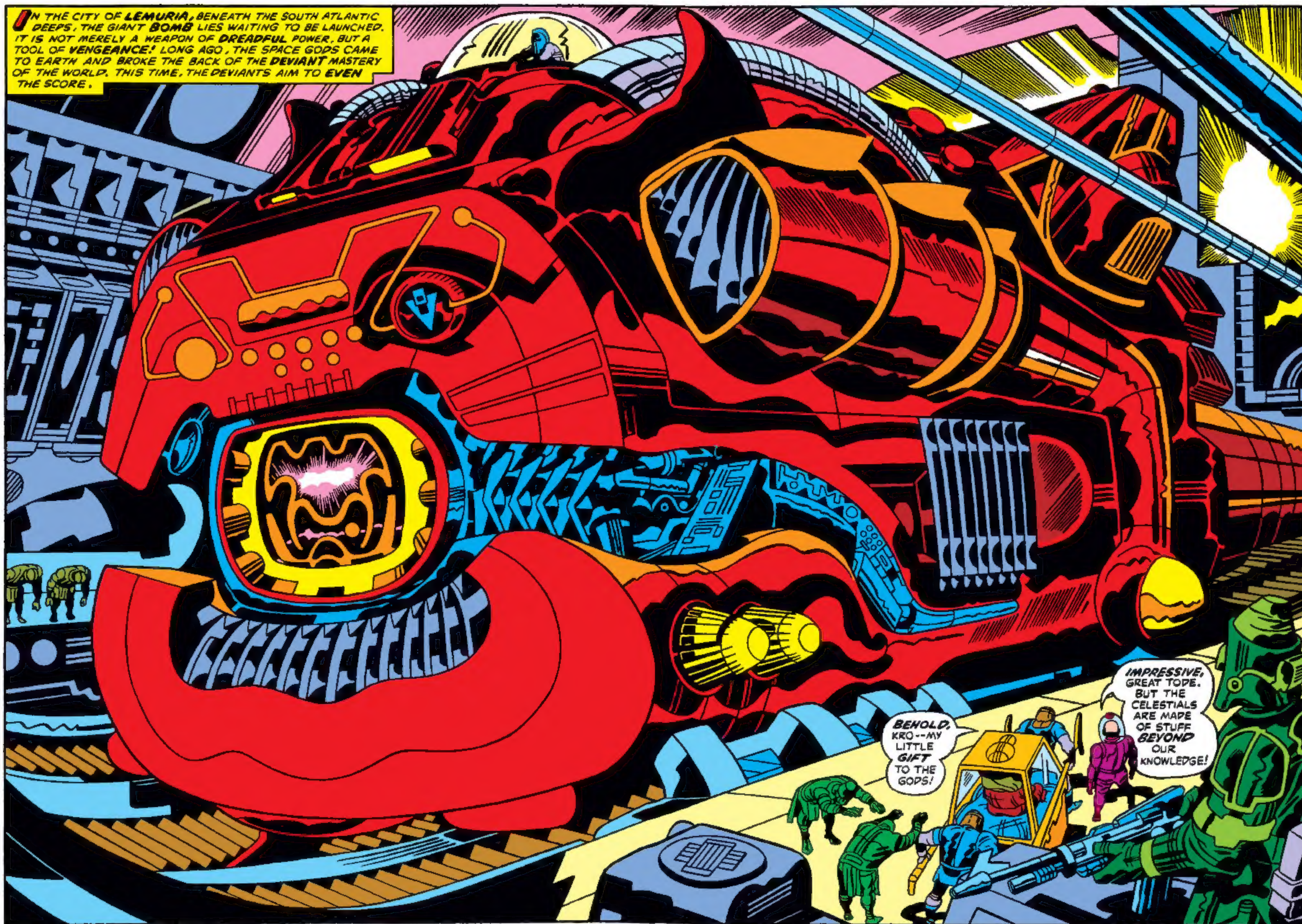
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE ETERNALS!™

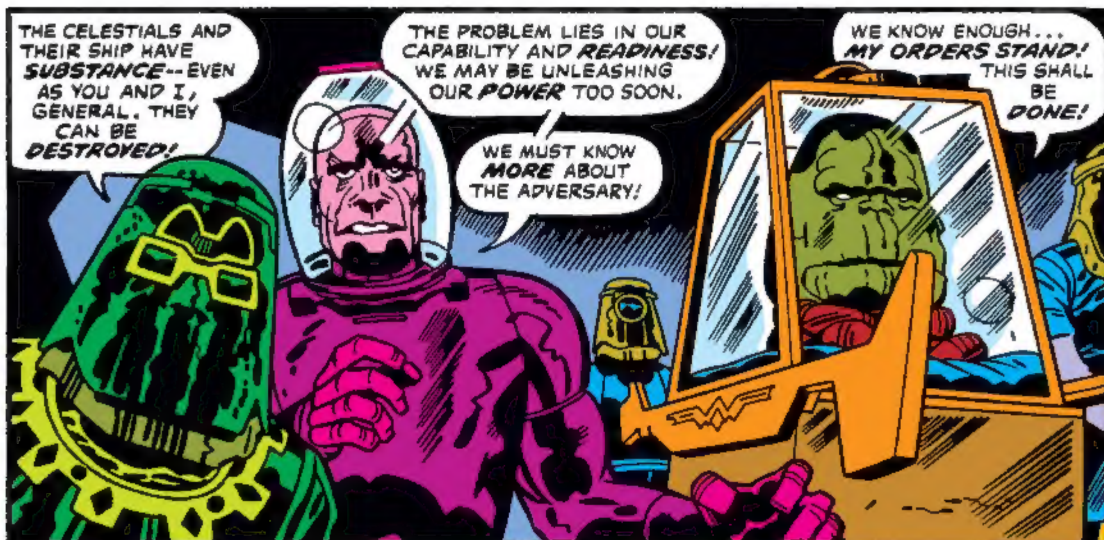
EDITED, WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY JACK KIRBY • LETTERED AND INKED BY MIKE ROYER • COLORED BY GLYNIS WEIN • APPRECIATED BY ARCHIE GOODWIN

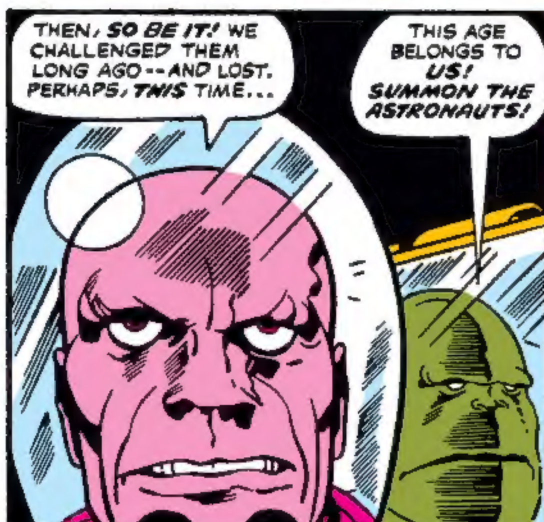
IMAGES ONCE CARVED ON STONE BY THE ANCIENT INCAS, HAVE COME TO LIFE! AND, WHAT'S MORE, THEY'VE COME TO EARTH! THE SPACE GODS HAVE RETURNED! ... AND A NEW AWARENESS OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE HAS GRIPPED US IN THE WAKE OF THEIR ARRIVAL! WHILE GIANT CELESTIALS NOW ROAM OUR WORLD, THEIR SPACECRAFT ORBITS THE PLANET! THIS IS THE STORY OF THOSE WHO ARE SENT TO DEAL WITH THAT SPACECRAFT: THE

ASTRONAUTS!




IN THE CITY OF LEMURIA, BENEATH THE SOUTH ATLANTIC DEEPS, THE GIANT BOMB LIES WAITING TO BE LAUNCHED. IT IS NOT MERELY A WEAPON OF DREADFUL POWER, BUT A TOOL OF VENGEANCE! LONG AGO, THE SPACE GODS CAME TO EARTH AND BROKE THE BACK OF THE DEVIANT MASTERY OF THE WORLD. THIS TIME, THE DEVIANTS AIM TO EVEN THE SCORE.
BEHOLD, KRO--MY LITTLE GIFT TO THE GODS!
IMPRESSIVE, GREAT TODE. BUT THE CELESTIALS ARE MADE OF STUFF BEYOND OUR KNOWLEDGE!


THE CELESTIALS AND THEIR SHIP HAVE SUBSTANCE--EVEN AS YOU AND I, GENERAL. THEY CAN BE DESTROYED!
THE PROBLEM LIES IN OUR CAPABILITY AND READINESS! WE MAY BE UNLEASHING OUR POWER TOO SOON.
WE MUST KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ADVERSARY!
WE KNOW ENOUGH... MY ORDERS STAND! THIS SHALL BE DONE!


THEN, SO BE IT! WE CHALLENGED THEM LONG AGO--AND LOST. PERHAPS, THIS TIME...
THIS AGE BELONGS TO US! SUMMON THE ASTRONAUTS!


A HUGE DOOR OPENS AND THREE DEVIANTS EMERGE...
COME FORTH, BRAVE ONES!
WE OBEY, GREAT TODE. YOUR WORD IS OUR DESTINY!

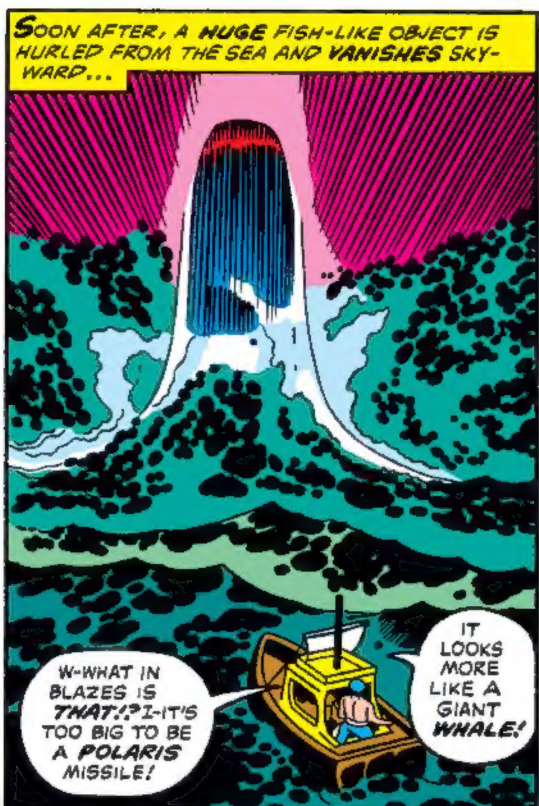

MY WORD IS ABSOLUTE! ALL DEVIANTS LIVE AND DIE BY THE POWER OF MY WORD!
NOW...REVEAL ALL THAT HAS BEEN SAID TO YOU.
YES, SIRE.

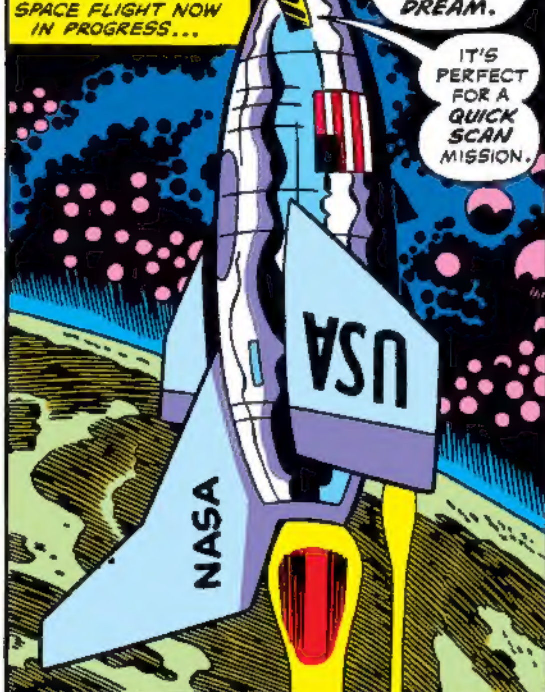

WE SHALL GUIDE THE ENERGY-BOMB INTO SPACE. IT WILL ACTIVATE AT A HEIGHT OF 500 MILES. AS IT GAINS KILL-POWER, WE SHALL INCREASE OUR SPEED AND REACH THE CELESTIAL CRAFT AT THE MOMENT OF DETONATION!


EACH OF US WILL PERISH IN THE BLAST. BUT WE ARE RESIGNED TO THIS FATE!
YOU SHOULD BE PROUD! PROUD!
YOURS WILL BE A MONUMENTAL FEAT!


THE BLOW-UP WILL NOT ONLY DESTROY A VESSEL OF THE SPACE GODS -- IT WILL SCORCH VAST AREAS OF THIS PLANET AND RID US OF MILLIONS OF CURSED HUMANS!
WHEN IT IS OVER, THE DEVIANTS SHALL RISE SAFELY FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA AND WREST CONTROL FROM OUR SHATTERED COUSINS.
YOUR MISSION IS CLEAR!

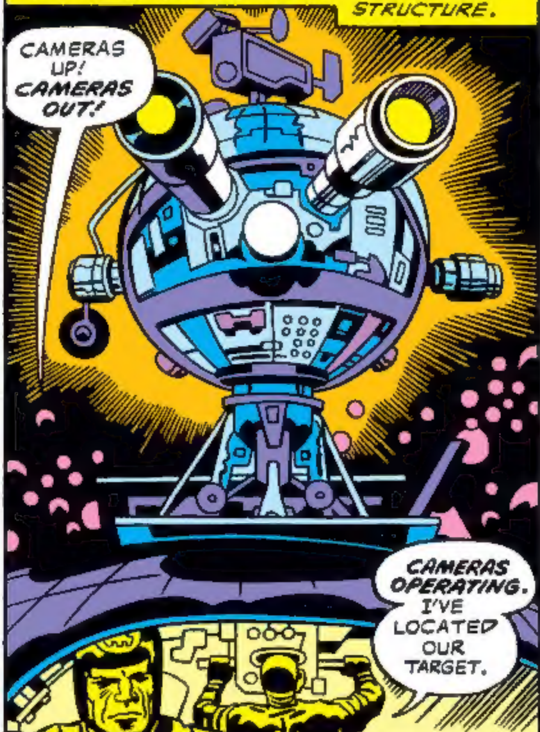

TO DESTROY IS TO TRIUMPH!!
DEPART, AND FLY--FOR THE GLORY OF ANCIENT LEMURIA!
WE LEAVE AT ONCE! FAREWELL, GREAT TODE.
WE ARE DETERMINED TO SUCCEED!


SOON AFTER, A HUGE FISH-LIKE OBJECT IS HURLED FROM THE SEA AND VANISHES SKY-WARD...
W-WHAT IN BLAZES IS THAT!? I-IT'S TOO BIG TO BE A POLARIS MISSILE!
IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A GIANT WHALE!


BUT THE DEVIANTS HAVE MADE THEIR RECKLESS MOVE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF ANOTHER SPACE FLIGHT NOW IN PROGRESS...
THIS NEW SHUTTLE JOB HANDLES LIKE A DREAM.
IT'S PERFECT FOR A QUICK SCAN MISSION.
USA
NASA


U.S. ASTRONAUTS TERRY PARKER AND MATT DURGAN HAVE LEFT CAPE CANAVERAL FAR BEHIND THEM. THEIR OBJECTIVE IS A MYSTERY MORE PUZZLING THAN THE FARTHEST PLANET...
SPACE GIANTS. WE'VE GOT TO SPY ON SPACE GIANTS! IT MAKES WALKING ON THE MOON SEEM LIKE NOSTALGIA.
YEAH. WHILE WE WERE BRIGHT-EYED AND BIG-CHESTED ABOUT SPACE TRAVEL, THE COMPETITION WAS ON ITS WAY TO US!


SPACE GIANTS... THEY'VE GOT A BASE IN THE ANDES, AND A CREW MARCHING ALL OVER OUR TURF!
DON'T FORGET THEIR ORBITING MAMA SHIP, MAN! I-I COULDN'T BELIEVE THOSE TELESCOPIC PHOTOS!

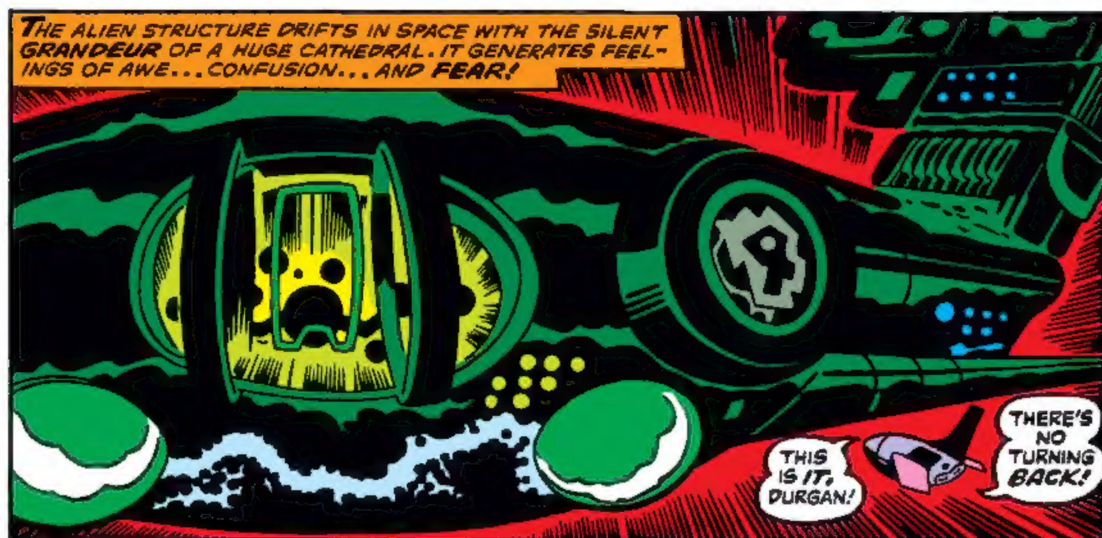

AND THAT IS THE CORE OF THE AMERICAN MISSION: TO CLOSE WITH THE ALIEN VESSEL AND OBTAIN DEFINITIVE DETAIL ON ITS OUTER STRUCTURE.
CAMERAS UP! CAMERAS OUT!
CAMERAS OPERATING. I'VE LOCATED OUR TARGET.

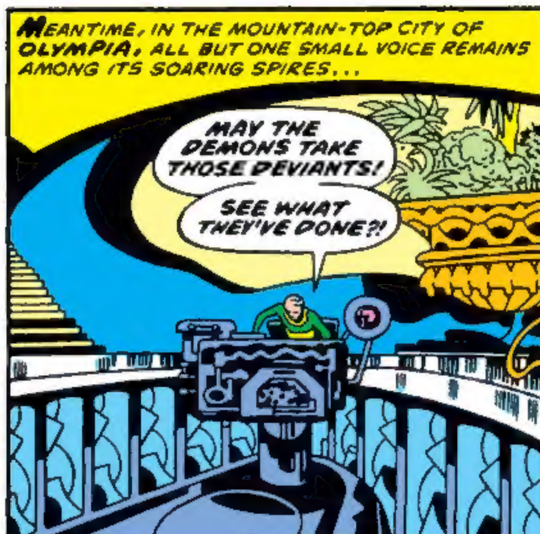

SEE ANYTHING WORTH LOOKING AT--? THE CRAFT WAS JUST A BIG DARK BLOB IN THE PHOTOS WE WERE SHOWN.
WE'LL LEARN MORE AS WE GET CLOSER, MATT. THESE CAMERAS WILL PICK UP EVERY NUT AND BOLT!


THEY'D BETTER! THERE ARE BIG STAKES RIDING ON THIS MISSION. THAT'S A DIRECT QUOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF!
NO LECTURES, DURGAN... PLEASE. MUST YOU BE A SERGEANT ALL OF YOUR LIFE?


A SERGEANT NEVER FORGETS HIS JOB, PARKER... ESPECIALLY AFTER HE'S MADE IT THROUGH THE RANKS TO MAJOR!
HEY! I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY, NOW! MAN! LOOK AT IT... LOOK AT THAT SHIP!!


THE SWIFT NARROWING OF DISTANCE CREATES A STAGGERING VISUAL IMPACT! IT IS A SIGHT WHICH NO HUMAN IS PREPARED FOR...
TO SEE THIS IS TO LEARN THE TRUE MEANING OF THE WORD-- BIG!
OHH-- WOWWW!


THE ALIEN STRUCTURE DRIFTS IN SPACE WITH THE SILENT GRANDEUR OF A HUGE CATHEDRAL. IT GENERATES FEELINGS OF AWE... CONFUSION... AND FEAR!
THIS IS IT, DURGAN!
THERE'S NO TURNING BACK!


MEANTIME, IN THE MOUNTAIN-TOP CITY OF OLYMPIA, ALL BUT ONE SMALL VOICE REMAINS AMONG ITS SOARING SPIRES...
MAY THE DEMONS TAKE THOSE DEVIANTS!
SEE WHAT THEY'VE DONE?!

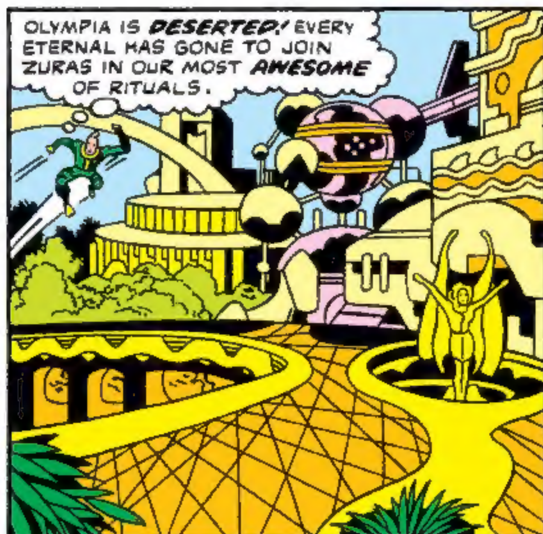

T-THEY'VE LAUNCHED SOME KIND OF INFERNAL WEAPON AT THE CRAFT OF THE SPACE GODS!
T-THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WILL HAPPEN... ONCE THAT THING STRIKES ITS MARK!


WOE TO THE WORLD, IF THE GODS RETALIATE! WOE TO THE ETERNALS IN THIS UNEXPECTED MOMENT OF IMPENDING HOLOCAUST!!
WOE TO POOR SPRITE WHO WAS CHARGED WITH THIS DUTY!


HOW EAGERLY I ACCEPTED IT! WHAT FUN, I THOUGHT... TO PRY INTO THE WORLD'S CORNERS WITH THE MECHANISMS OF ZURAS AND PEER AT MORTALS PURSUING THEIR FOLLIES!

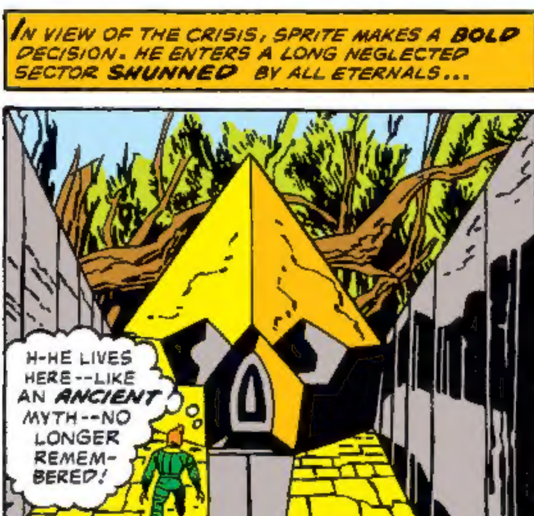

OH, STUPID SPRITE--! MONARCH OF MUDDLE-HEADS! YOU'VE SEEN TOO MUCH! THE FATE OF THE EARTH HAS BEEN THRUST INTO YOUR QUAKING LAP!
SOMETHING MUST BE DONE!


SPRITE LEVITATES FROM HIS POST WITH UN-CANNY SPEED. HE SCOURS THE EMPTY STREETS OF OLYMPIA FOR THE SMALLEST SIGN OF A FELLOW ETERNAL...

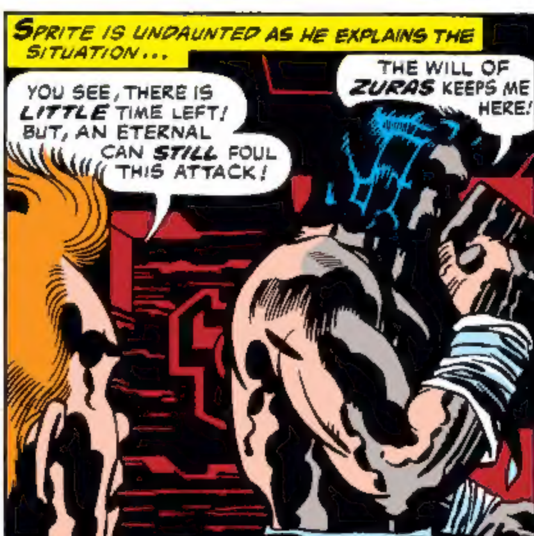

OLYMPIA IS DESERTED! EVERY ETERNAL HAS GONE TO JOIN ZURAS IN OUR MOST AWESOME OF RITUALS.


THEY'VE GONE TO FORM THE UNI-MIND!* OUR MEANS OF COPING WITH AN ERA OF DIRE STRESS.
WHAT IRONY! THE RITUAL GRAPPLES WITH THE PROBLEM OF THE SPACE GODS, EVEN AS THE DEVIANTS SCUTTLE ALL HOPE OF DEALING WITH THEM!
* IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE UNIMIND, GET OUR PREVIOUS ISSUE. IT'S A BLOCKBUSTER! --J.K.


HOLD, SPRITE! THIS PLACE MAY BE EMPTY OF ALL BUT--HOPE! LIKE ANY ADHERENT TO THE WISDOM OF ZURAS, I'VE OVERLOOKED THE FORGOTTEN ONE!
DO I DARE BREAK AN EDICT OF CENTURIES --AND GO TO HIM?

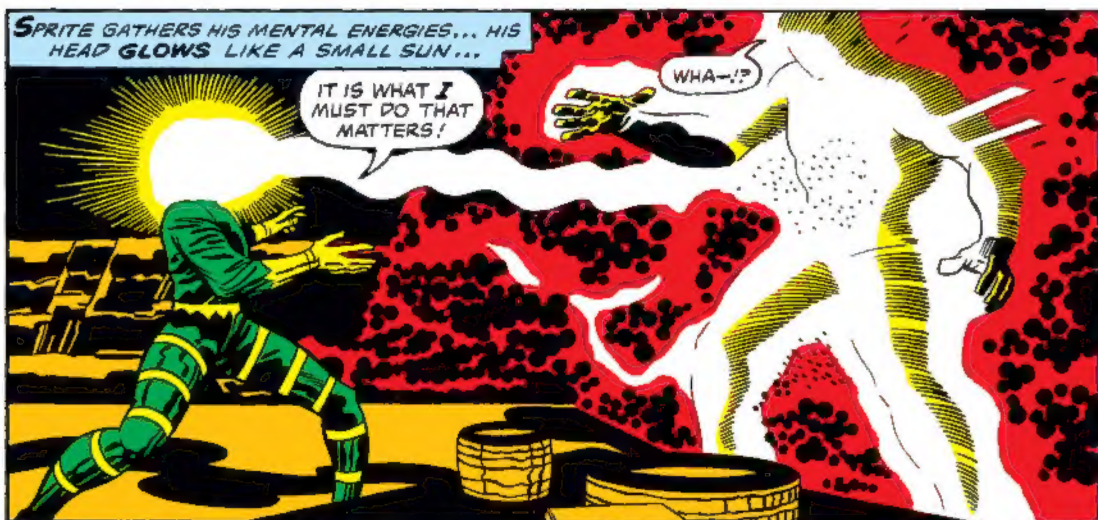

IN VIEW OF THE CRISIS, SPRITE MAKES A BOLD DECISION. HE ENTERS A LONG NEGLECTED SECTOR SHUNNED BY ALL ETERNALS...
H-HE LIVES HERE--LIKE AN ANCIENT MYTH--NO LONGER REMEMBERED!

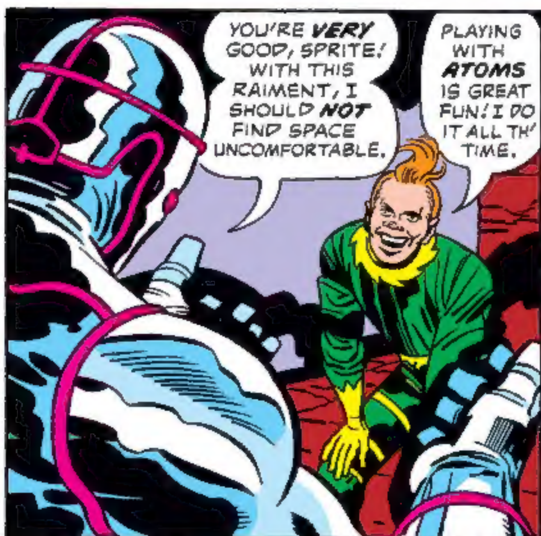

THEN...
I-I AM SPRITE. A GREAT URGENCY FORCES ME TO INTRUDE UPON YOU!
IF YOU HAVE NEED OF A HERO, I AM TOLD THAT THE TIME FOR ONE HAS LONG PAST!

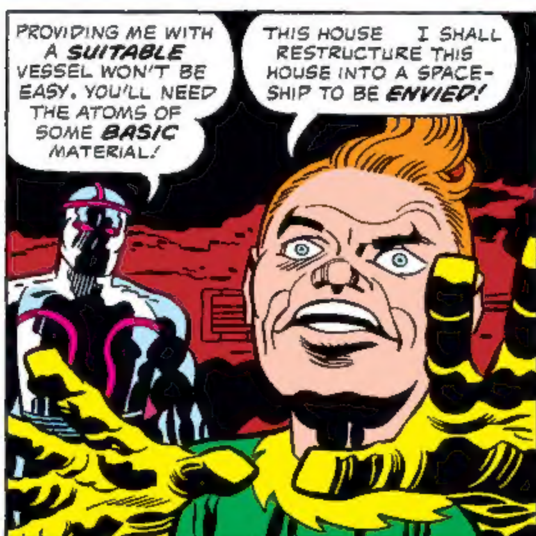

SPRITE IS UNDAUNTED AS HE EXPLAINS THE SITUATION...
YOU SEE, THERE IS LITTLE TIME LEFT! BUT, AN ETERNAL CAN STILL FOUL THIS ATTACK!
THE WILL OF ZURAS KEEPS ME HERE!

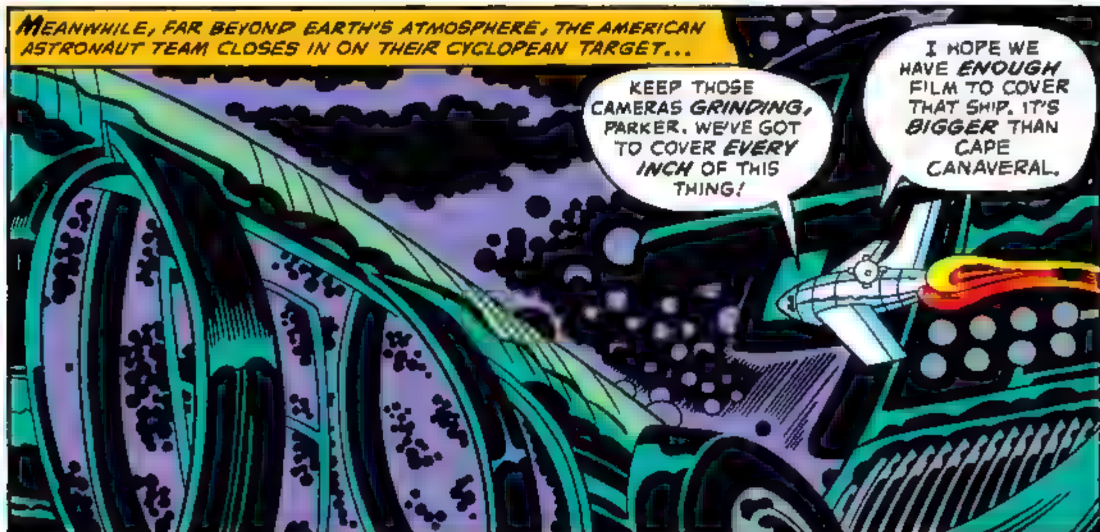

ONCE I ROAMED THE WORLD AMONG THE HUMANS AND SHOOK IT TO IMPROVE THEIR LOT. I TOPPLED THE PALACES OF TYRANTS AND SLEW THE BEASTS THEY COULD NOT CONQUER.
THE HUMANS KNEW ME BY MANY NAMES... BUT HERE, I HAVE NONE!


ZURAS BANISHED YOU FOR YOUR PRIDE! YOUR WILL TO MEDDLE IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.
BUT I CALL UPON YOU FOR YOUR STRENGTH... AND ONE UNSELFISH UNIVERSAL ACT...
IF ZURAS IS ABSENT--HIS EDICT IS ABSENT. WHAT MUST I DO?

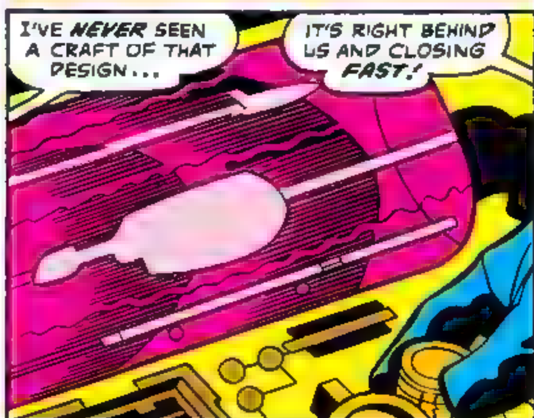

SPRITE GATHERS HIS MENTAL ENERGIES... HIS HEAD GLOWS LIKE A SMALL SUN...
IT IS WHAT I MUST DO THAT MATTERS!
WHA--!?

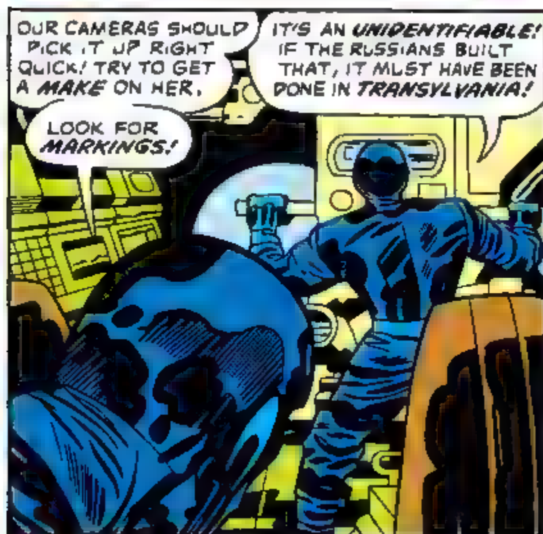

YOU'RE VERY GOOD, SPRITE! WITH THIS RAIMENT, I SHOULD NOT FIND SPACE UNCOMFORTABLE.
PLAYING WITH ATOMS IS GREAT FUN! I DO IT ALL TH' TIME.


PROVIDING ME WITH A SUITABLE VESSEL WON'T BE EASY. YOU'LL NEED THE ATOMS OF SOME BASIC MATERIAL!
THIS HOUSE I SHALL RESTRUCTURE THIS HOUSE INTO A SPACE-SHIP TO BE ENVIED!

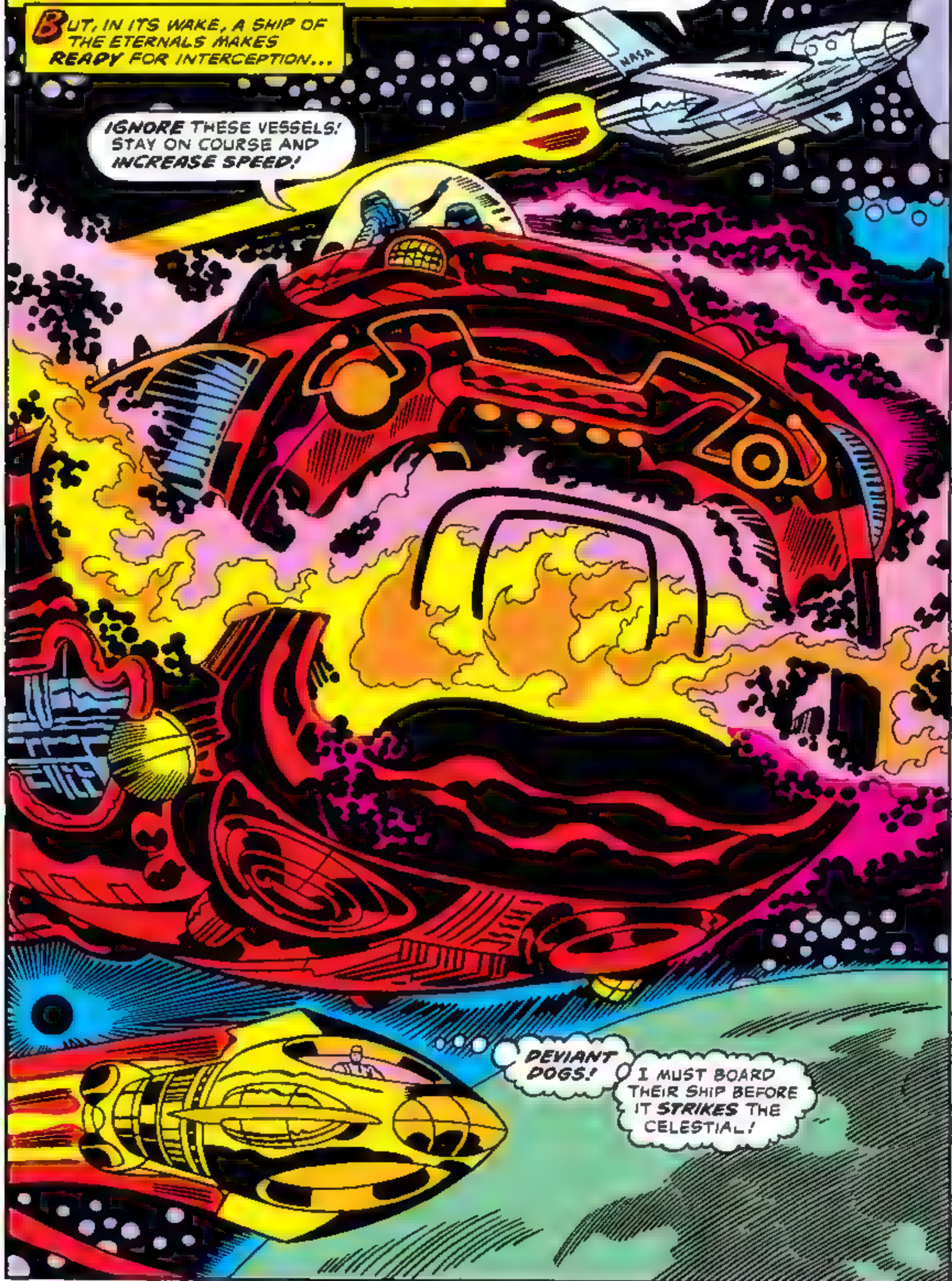

MEANWHILE, FAR BEYOND EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT TEAM CLOSES IN ON THEIR CYCLOPEAN TARGET...
KEEP THOSE CAMERAS GRINDING, PARKER. WE'VE GOT TO COVER EVERY INCH OF THIS THING!
I HOPE WE HAVE ENOUGH FILM TO COVER THAT SHIP. IT'S BIGGER THAN CAPE CANAVERAL.

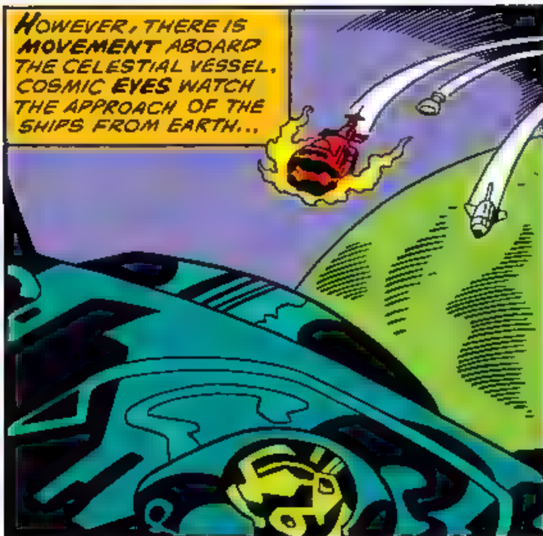

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHO OR WHAT MIGHT BE ABOARD THAT THING. DO YOU SUPPOSE --?
HOLD IT! WE'VE GOT COMPANY!


A NEW SILHOUETTE REGISTERS ON THE LASER-SCOPE. IT IS LARGER THAN THE AMERICAN SHIP, AND APPROACHING THEIR SAME TARGET...
I'VE NEVER SEEN A CRAFT OF THAT DESIGN...
IT'S RIGHT BEHIND US AND CLOSING FAST!

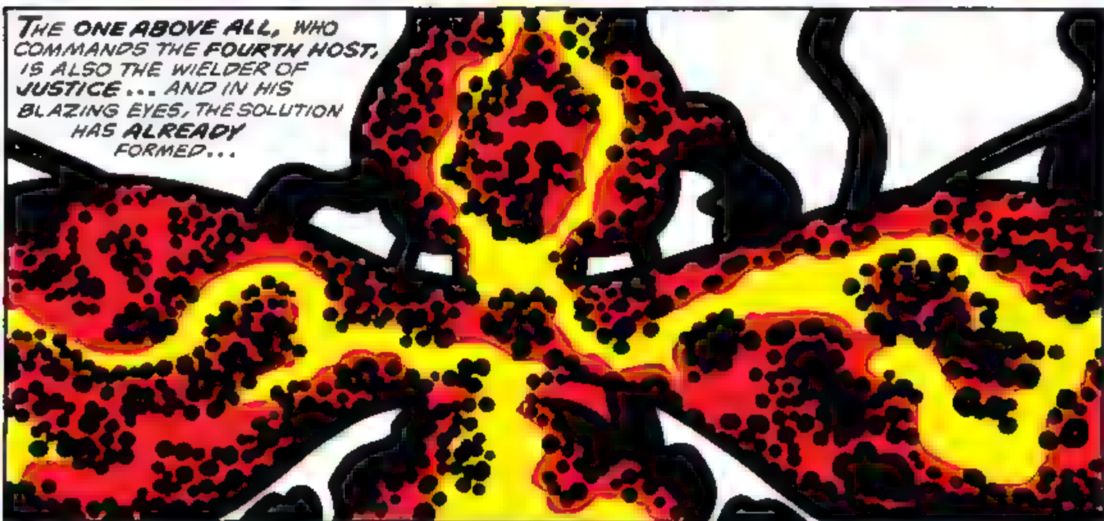

OUR CAMERAS SHOULD PICK IT UP RIGHT QUICK! TRY TO GET A MAKE ON HER.
LOOK FOR MARKINGS!
IT'S AN UNIDENTIFIABLE! IF THE RUSSIANS BUILT THAT, IT MUST HAVE BEEN DONE IN TRANSYLVANIA!

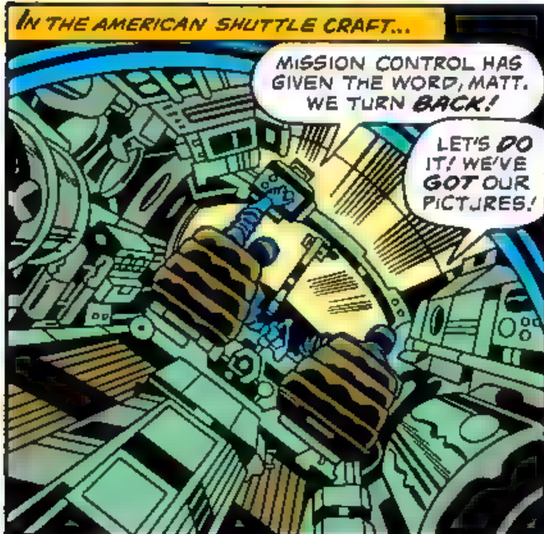

THERE IT IS! BELOW US!
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF WHALE! ONLY IT'S SPOUTING FIRE FROM VARIOUS POINTS IN IT'S HULL!
YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS, MATT! A NEW VEHICLE! YET ANOTHER MYSTERY SHIP! WE'VE BECOME A DAMNED PARADE!


THE MANNED BOMB OF THE DEVIANTS HURTLES TOWARD ITS OBJECTIVE WITH GRIM INTENT... FLARING STREAMERS OF SEETHING ENERGY MARK ITS PROGRESS, GLOWING BRIGHT AND FIERCE AS THE WHITE HOT CORE OF ITS DEADLY ATOMIC PILE NEARS THE HOLOCAUST RANGE.
BUT, IN ITS WAKE, A SHIP OF THE ETERNALS MAKES READY FOR INTERCEPTION...
I DON'T LIKE THIS, PARKER! SOMETHING IN MY GUT TELLS ME THOSE TWO SPELL TROUBLE!
NOT FOR US. THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE ALIEN!
NASA
IGNORE THESE VESSELS! STAY ON COURSE AND INCREASE SPEED!
DEVIANT DOGS!
I MUST BOARD THEIR SHIP BEFORE IT STRIKES THE CELESTIAL!

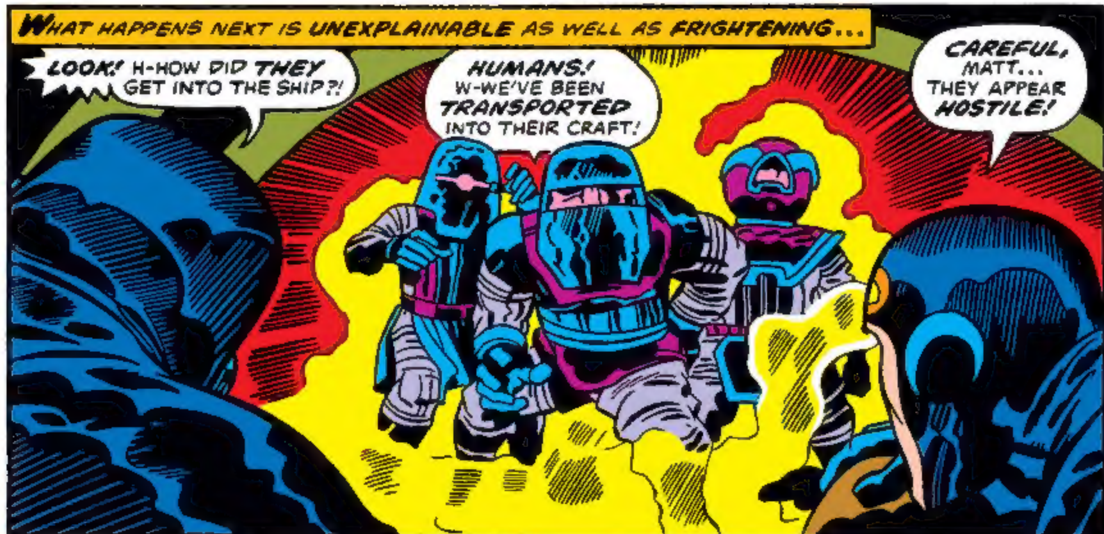

HOWEVER, THERE IS MOVEMENT ABOARD THE CELESTIAL VESSEL. COSMIC EYES WATCH THE APPROACH OF THE SHIPS FROM EARTH...


A COSMIC MIND QUICKLY DISCERNS THE MISSIONS OF THE ASTRONAUTS. THE CELESTIAL IS FACED WITH A SIMPLE PROBLEM: THE CREWS ARE IN THE WRONG SHIPS...

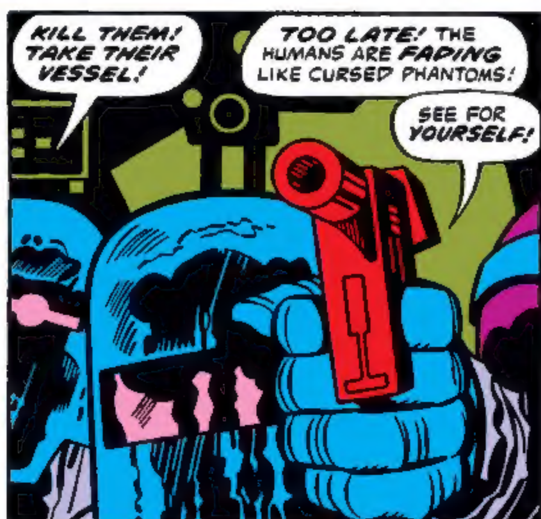

THE ONE ABOVE ALL, WHO COMMANDS THE FOURTH HOST, IS ALSO THE WIELDER OF JUSTICE... AND IN HIS BLAZING EYES, THE SOLUTION HAS ALREADY FORMED...


IN THE AMERICAN SHUTTLE CRAFT...
MISSION CONTROL HAS GIVEN THE WORD, MATT. WE TURN BACK!
LET'S DO IT! WE'VE GOT OUR PICTURES!

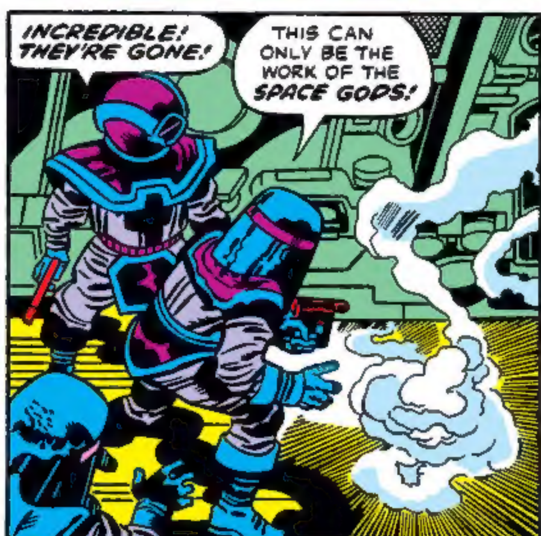

AT THAT MOMENT...
W-WHA--!?
ZUM!


WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS UNEXPLAINABLE AS WELL AS FRIGHTENING...
LOOK! H-HOW DID THEY GET INTO THE SHIP?!
HUMANS! W-WE'VE BEEN TRANSPORTED INTO THEIR CRAFT!
CAREFUL, MATT... THEY APPEAR HOSTILE!

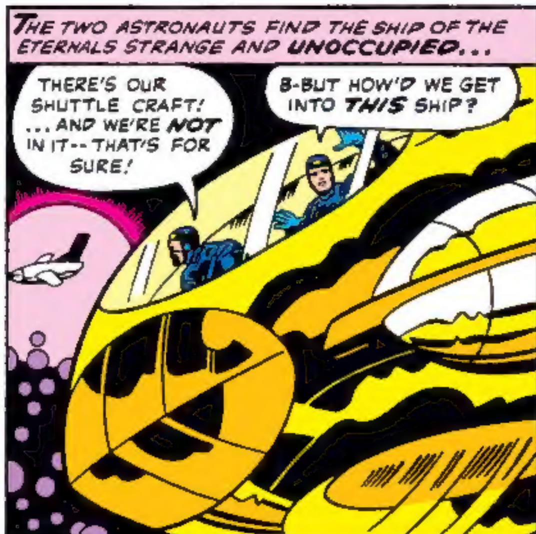

THEY ARE HOSTILE! THEY'RE USING THEIR WEAPONS!
CUT THAT OUT! WHO ARE YOU GUYS?!
POW!
SUBJECTS OF GREAT TODE... RULER OF THE DEVIANTS!

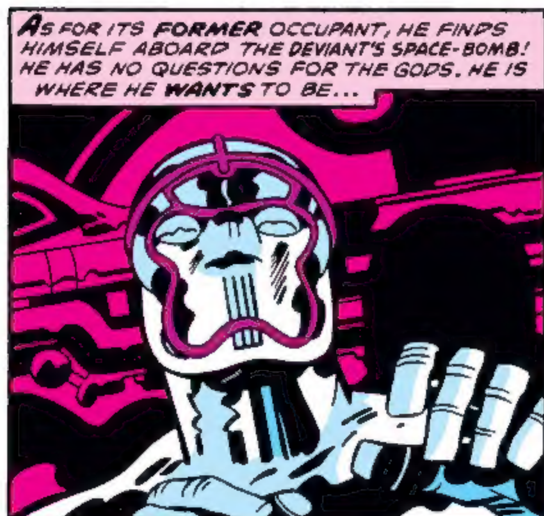

KILL THEM! TAKE THEIR VESSEL!
TOO LATE! THE HUMANS ARE FADING LIKE CURSED PHANTOMS!
SEE FOR YOURSELF!

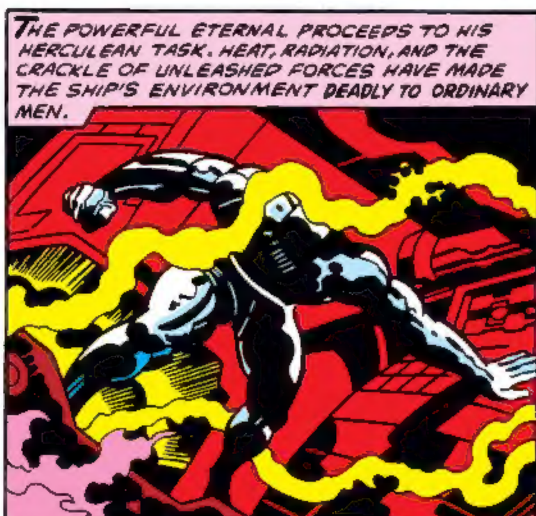

WIDE-EYED WITH WONDER, THE DEVIANTS WATCH AS THE AMERICANS VANISH IN A BRIGHT FLASH OF LIGHT...
ZUM!

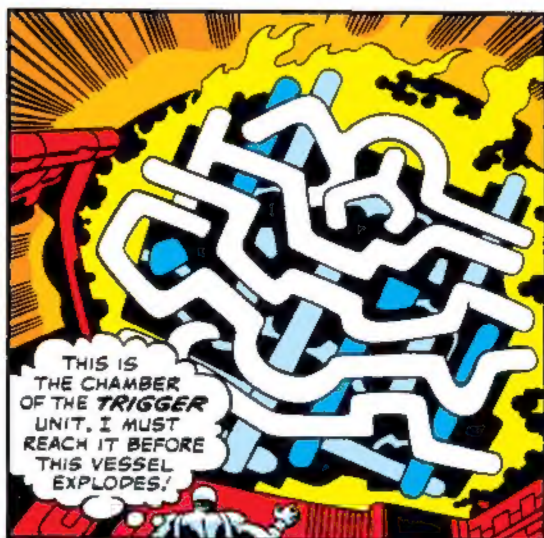

INCREDIBLE! THEY'RE GONE!
THIS CAN ONLY BE THE WORK OF THE SPACE GODS!

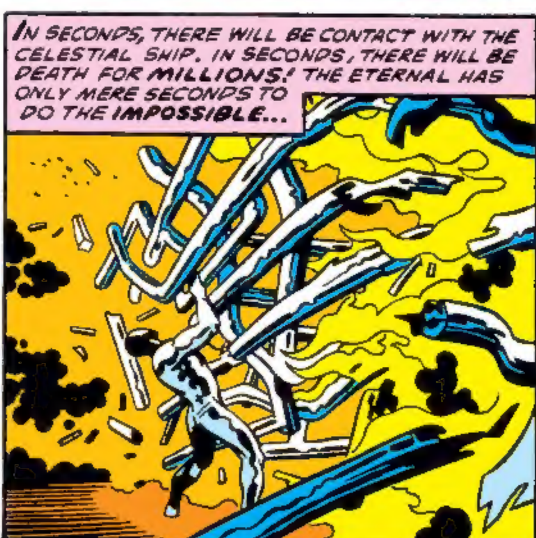

MEANWHILE, MATT DURGAN AND TERRY PARKER REAPPEAR IN ANOTHER SPACE VEHICLE...
T-TERRY--! W-WHAT'S HAPPENED!?
YOU TELL ME!

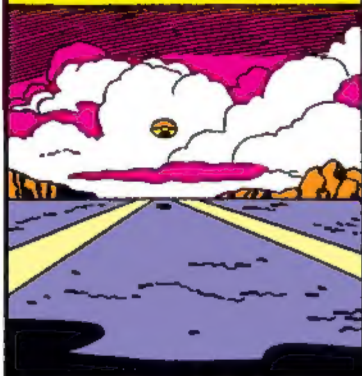

THE TWO ASTRONAUTS FIND THE SHIP OF THE ETERNALS STRANGE AND UNOCCUPIED...
THERE'S OUR SHUTTLE CRAFT! ...AND WE'RE NOT IN IT-- THAT'S FOR SURE!
B-BUT HOW'D WE GET INTO THIS SHIP?

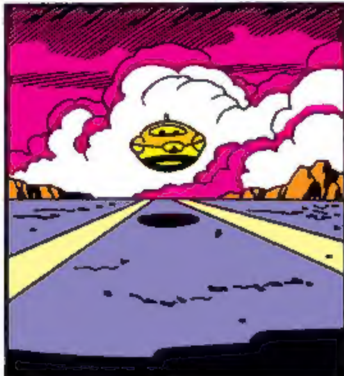

AS FOR ITS FORMER OCCUPANT, HE FINDS HIMSELF ABOARD THE DEVIANT'S SPACE-BOMB! HE HAS NO QUESTIONS FOR THE GODS. HE IS WHERE HE WANTS TO BE...

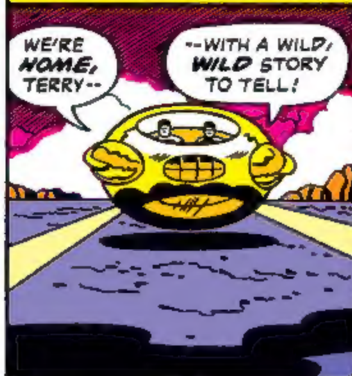

THE POWERFUL ETERNAL PROCEEDS TO HIS HERCULEAN TASK. HEAT, RADIATION, AND THE CRACKLE OF UNLEASHED FORCES HAVE MADE THE SHIP'S ENVIRONMENT DEADLY TO ORDINARY MEN.


THIS IS THE CHAMBER OF THE TRIGGER UNIT. I MUST REACH IT BEFORE THIS VESSEL EXPLODES!


IN SECONDS, THERE WILL BE CONTACT WITH THE CELESTIAL SHIP. IN SECONDS, THERE WILL BE DEATH FOR MILLIONS! THE ETERNAL HAS ONLY MERE SECONDS TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE...

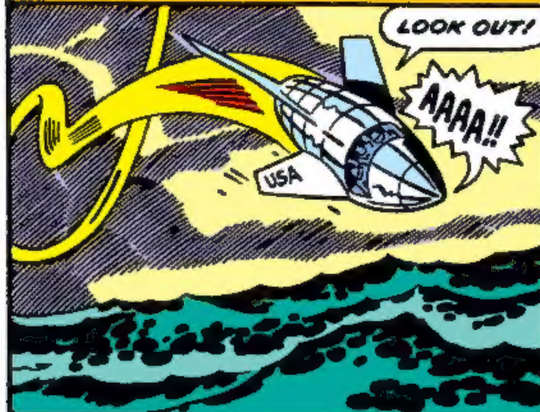

IT IS AN HOUR WHEN THE IMPOSSIBLE HAS SUDDENLY BECOME INCREDIBLE REALITY! AT A SECRET NASA AIRFIELD IN THE MOJAVE DESERT, THE RETURN OF THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUTS IS EAGERLY AWAITED...

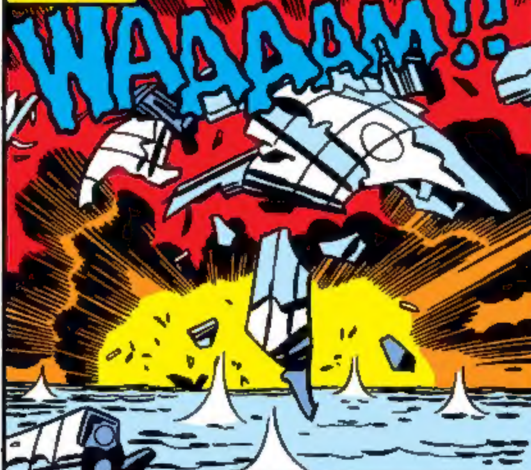

A VEHICLE IS SIGHTED. A VEHICLE IS TRACKED. A VEHICLE ASSUMES ITS GLIDE-PATH AND PREPARES TO LAND! MATT DURGAN AND TERRY PARKER HAVE COME BACK FROM SPACE!

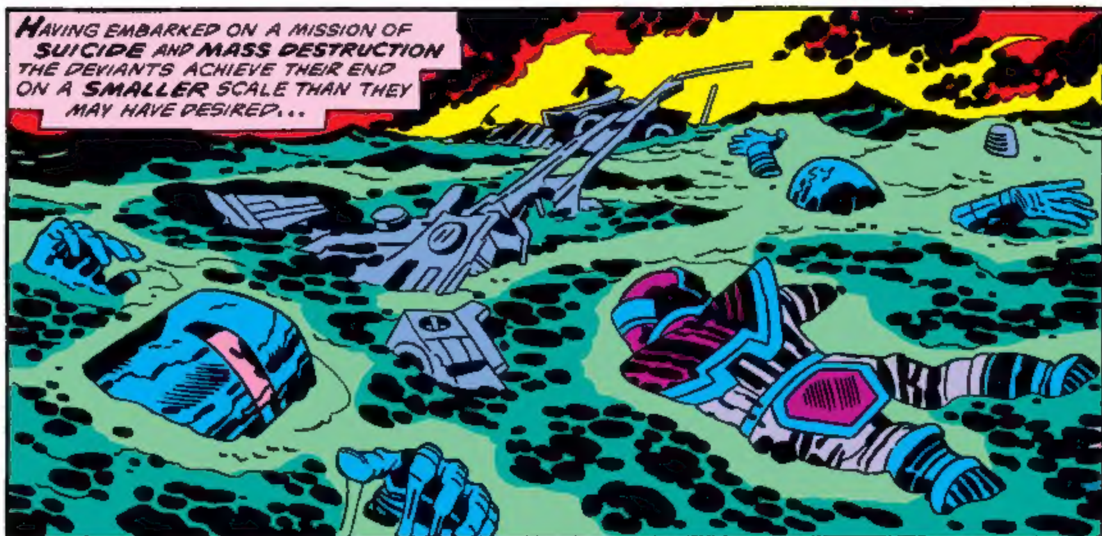

ALTHOUGH THEIR CRAFT IS NOT THE ONE IN WHICH THEY DEPARTED, THE AMERICANS HAVE HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN OPERATING IT... ONCE THEY DISCOVERED THAT IT COULD BE GUIDED IN BY THE POWER OF THOUGHT ALONE...
WE'RE HOME, TERRY--
--WITH A WILD, WILD STORY TO TELL!

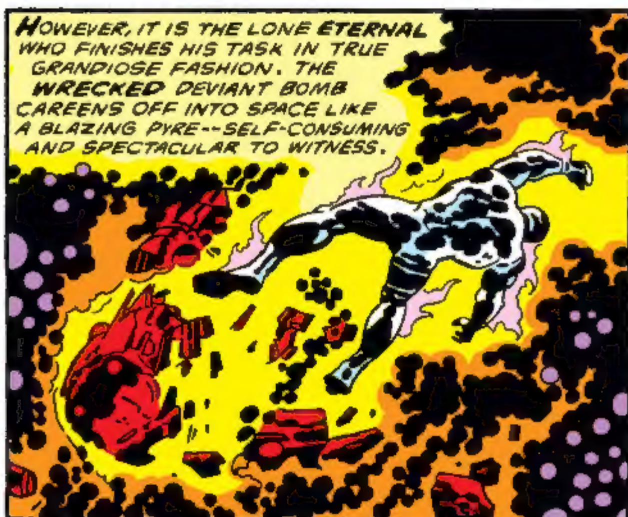

THE BARREN LANDING STRIP IS SOON OVERRUN BY A VARIED REPRESENTATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES. THEY STARE UNBELIEVINGLY AT THE PHENOMENON BEFORE THEM...
THAT'S NOT THE SHUTTLE PLANE WE SENT UP THERE!
DURGAN AND PARKER HAVE A LOT TO EXPLAIN!

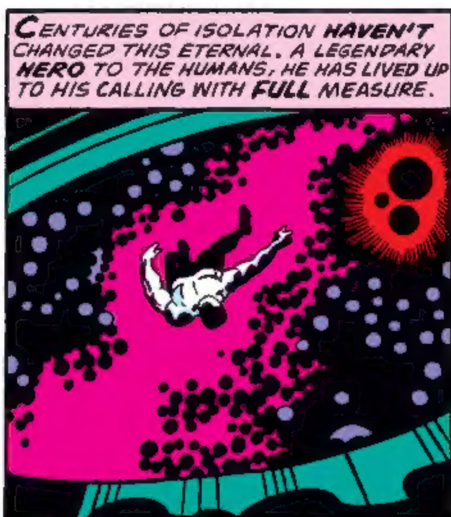

AN EXPLANATION WILL BE MADE, BUT IT WILL BECOME THE CAUSE OF CONSTERNATION AND DOUBT AND NOT DEBATE. HOWEVER, THE AMERICANS WILL HAVE WHAT THEY WANTED-- A REPORT FROM SPACE, AND TWO SAFE ASTRONAUTS...
LET'S FACE 'EM, PARKER --WITH THE FACTS AS WE KNOW THEM!
YEAH... TERRIFIC!

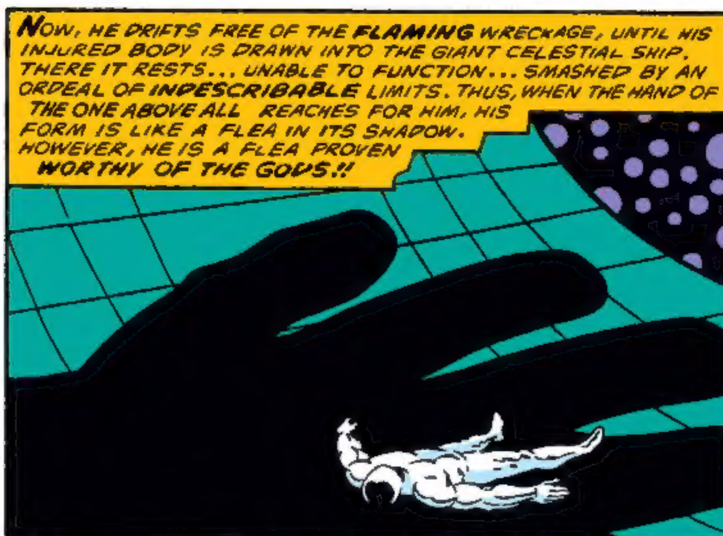

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE OVER THE SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN, THE DEVIANTS ATTEMPT A LANDING IN THE SHUTTLE PLANE. UNACQUAINTED WITH ITS CONTROLS, THEY BARREL IN AT HIGH SPEED TOWARD THE CHOPPY WATERS...
LOOK OUT!
AAAA!!
USA


THE RESULTANT CRASH IS HEARD FOR MILES AT SEA...
WAAAAM!!









NEXT: AMAZING ACTION!

IKARIS

BATTLES THE COSMIC-POWERED

HULK